

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

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PUBLIC HEARING

Atqasuk, Alaska

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 In Re: )  
 )  
 Amendment to the Northeast )  
 National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska )  
 Integrated Activity Plan/ )  
 7 Environmental Impact Statement )  
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TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

Atqasuk, Alaska

Atqasuk Community Center

August 10, 2004

6:00 p.m.

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 APPEARANCES:

13  
 BOB SCHNEIDER: Bureau of Land Management  
 Anchorage, Alaska

15  
 SUSAN CHILDS: Bureau of Land Management  
 Anchorage, Alaska

16  
 STUART PAULUS: ENSR International  
 Redmond, Washington

STEVE ELLSWORTH: ENSR International  
 Anchorage, Alaska

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ALSO PRESENT:

21  
 Hearing Officer Arnold Brower, Jr.  
 and Translator: Barrow, Alaska

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23  
 Court Reporter: Janice Scott, Metro Court  
 Reporting,

Anchorage, Alaska

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P R O C E E D I N G S

(On record)

MR. SCHNEIDER: Good evening, Ladies and Gentlemen. My name is Bob Schneider, I'm the field manager for the Bureau of Land Management's Northern Field Office in Fairbanks, and I would like to welcome you to this public hearing to hear about the Plan Amendment that the Bureau of Land Management is proposing for the Northeast portion of the National Petroleum Reserve, Alaska.

We have an orientation program for you this evening, and we tried it last night in Nuiqsut and it seemed to work very well. In the past I have been giving the presentation in English and then we've had Arnold or another individual to translate, but what we're going to do tonight is to do what we did last night, and that is to have Arnold give the presentation in your Native language without me giving it in English. So, the slides are in English so that those of you that are here that want to read, you can read and you can then listen to Arnold as we go through the presentation.

Before we start, and I know that I didn't ask her to do it before, but I would like to ask Martha if she would lead us in an invocation.

Thank you.

MARTHA KUGAK: (Gives brief invocation in Inupiaq)

CHAIR BROWER: (Translates Presentation in Inupiaq) The end.



MR. SCHNEIDER: Would you give Arnold a hand?

Thank you, Arnold.

CHAIR BROWER: (Speaking in Inupiaq) Mark Major?

If you would go to that microphone right there so that your words can be recorded by our reporter, and speak clearly and state your name and who you represent. We don't particularly care how old you are.

STATEMENT BY MARK MAJOR

Good evening. My name is Mark Major and I'm a Senior Environmental Coordinator for Conoco-Phillips Alaska. Conoco-Phillips is the largest producer of oil and gas, and the most active explorer in Alaska. We have also been a long time neighbor of the community of Atkasuk, and I appreciate the opportunity to share my comments with you here tonight. Our company has a proven track record of high quality environmental performance on Alaska's North Slope and in the NPR-A, National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska. Conoco-Phillips is a leader in innovative solutions that protect the environment, such as the minimal footprint of the Alpine production facilities. Conoco-Phillips has participated in 15 exploration wells in the NPR-A, all without environmental incident. In 2001, Conoco-Phillips and our partner Anadarko Petroleum announced several discoveries in the NPR-A. Since that time, an EIS process, and that's Environmental Impact Statement, has begun for the new satellite field developments in both the NPR-A and on state and Native corporation lands near the Alpine

oil field. These new developments confirm the strategic

potential for oil and gas in the NPR-A.

As the draft plan points out, much has been learned since the Record of Decision for the Northeast area was first issued in

Conoco-Phillips endorses continued leasing in the Northeast portion of the NPR-A and the opening of Teshekpuk Lake by the BLM. This will allow access to some of the most important prospective areas, which are located near the crest of the Barrow Arch.

Conoco-Phillips believes that the most sensitive areas north of Teshekpuk Lake, such as the lakes which have the highest use by molting geese, should remain off limits. We also acknowledge that there should be a buffer around these lakes as a further measure for protection of these species.

However, we are concerned in general that BLM has recommended the blanket exclusion from leasing of the 350 square miles of additional prospective acreage north of Teshekpuk Lake. We are also concerned that BLM has not addressed some of the extensive stream setbacks in the area. In our opinion, the current three-mile setback at Fish Creek is unnecessary and is double the 1.5 miles originally recommended in the 1998.

Conoco-Phillips supports the BLM's proposed "performance-based" stipulations and required operating procedures for the Northeast NPR-A. These revised stipulations would provide a framework to make compliance efforts much more efficient, where we can continue to operate in a safe and environmentally-sound manner and respect the important subsistence usage of the area.

Conoco-Phillips remains committed to environmental

excellence and responsible development. Exploration activities in the proposed Northeast environmentally sensitive areas would take place with minimal impacts using ice roads and ice pads to access prospects during the Arctic winter.

Future oil and gas development in the NPR-A will have economic benefits for Alaska, for the communities of the North Slope and for the nation. For more than 30 years, oil and gas development has been the economic engine for the North Slope Borough and the State of Alaska.

In 2003, the State of Alaska received more than \$1 billion from the oil industry in taxes and royalties. The three previous lease sales in the NPR-A have generated more than \$222 million in bonus payments, split between the state and federal governments. Clearly, continued investment on the North Slope benefits everyone who lives in Alaska, through monies for state and local governments that result in better services and better schools.

Conoco-Phillips also understands that economic benefit from continued oil and gas development is only part of the picture. We are keenly aware that the land and water of the North Slope, and the subsistence environment and traditions it supports, are fundamental to the Native culture. These values must continue to be a vital part of our collective future.

Conoco-Phillips has proven that we can work closely with our neighbors and operate in a manner that respects the way of life of the residents of Alaska's North Slope. This takes

constant effort on both parts and we are committed to working

with the North Slope residents to ensure development happens in a way that respects your heritage and your subsistence way of life. In conclusion, Conoco-Phillips is pleased to offer these comments. Continued lease sales in the NPR-A will enhance the nation's energy and economic security, and our nation needs to secure its energy future. We are confident that the BLM and the residents of the North Slope will find a way to balance the needs of the nation with the needs of the Native people. Conoco-Phillips pledges to see that the balance defined from this effort is the balance that is maintained for generations to come. In addition to my comments today, Conoco-Phillips plans to submit written comments for this draft plan review process. Thank you. Quyanakpak.

CHAIR BROWER: Thank you, Mark. (Translates in Inupiaq)

I don't see any other names that are written in for those that want to speak tonight. So, I will open the floor to the public that is here, if they want to comment on any of these alternatives or the presentation that we've discussed here and presented to the Village of Atqasuk, Community of Atqasuk, that they may speak and go to the mike and say your peace.

If there are no others -- (speaking in Inupiaq) You can contact Susan Childs at phone number (907) 271-1985. I see Bob Schneider in the back, Fairbanks office. Comments can be submitted by accessing the website developed for this project (<http://nenpra.ensr.com>) You can submit both general and specific

comments, written comments can be mailed to Bureau of Land

Management, Alaska State Office, 222 West Seventh Avenue,  
Anchorage, Alaska 99513-7599. You have to complete and send in  
your comments by August 23. CD's, we have some in the back, so  
you can take one and make your comments.

UNIDENTIFIED LADY: You have until August 23rd?

CHAIR BROWER: August 23, 2004.

UNIDENTIFIED LADY: Okay.

CHAIR BROWER: I'll give you a moment to come up

to the mike, or officially I'll have to close. Bernadine?

STATEMENT BY BERNADINE ITTA

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For the record, Bernadine Itta. I got a question. Did

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Barrow choose one of the A, B, C or D?

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CHAIR BROWER: A.

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MS. ITTA: So they chose A? Okay. Because I was

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the last time you guys were here, we were given a choice and

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if the community wanted to make a choice, we were given some more

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time and I guess our doors are going closed. I was kind of --

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wanted to see what Barrow wanted to chose before I go along with

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them in case, you know, I didn't want to go against them because,

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you know, in the future, I bet you they will come over this way

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and it would kind of help me see how they chose what they cannot

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do. It would kind of help because we do go out hunting, caribou

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hunting and fishing. And we go in different directions.

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We go up river and then... (speaking in Inupiaq) Thank

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you.

CHAIR BROWER: Thank you, Bernadine. Thomas

Itta, Sr.

STATEMENT OF THOMAS ITTA, SR.

Good evening. (Speaking in Inupiaq) Thank you.

CHAIR BROWER: Thank you, Thomas. (Applause)

Thomas Itta, for the record. A resident of Atqasuk. And he's concerned on fish in lakes and rivers over wintering areas and seismic. Sometime ago they had been involved with the -- working with seismics before and it has devastated known wintering areas near here and Ikpikpuk. And these were -- these are dynamite things and they know that this does kill and devastates fishes, stocks of fish, many of them and many known over wintering areas. And he's -- and perhaps on account of those that the setbacks, maybe that may be warranted to be even a little bit more to -- rather than relaxing them in all the ravines, including rivers.

In the wintering years when ice gets thicker and the waters and the fishes are even more sensitive because the ice, the more ice there is the water becomes more dense, so much that it's -- any little sharp noise or bang of those effects can kill fish. And included one incident where when there was fishes site

on a clear day you can see it clear, but under the water and -

and for -- not for it to be lost, the ice is 10 to 14 inches

and you can slap that with a -- like a bang and cause that fish either to die instantly and those are known types of things that have killed the fishes and especially when the ice is thick, because the pressure of the ice makes that water more dense and easy to kill the fishes.

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Fish  
Seismic

And he's more concerned about the east -- the lakes east  
of the Ikpikpuk because they are filled with fish, and he's very

concerned about these for wintering and seismic because these are the Community of the Arctic Slope, Barrow, Atqasuk, Nuiqsut and Wainwright, they still rely heavily on the nutritional supplements from subsistence, and renewable resources especially in these fishes -- I mean, lakes where there are fishes. These are known, you know, for to supplement the dietary and nutritional needs. And they need to be heavily protected. There is not much more else that we can rely on other than our renewable resources that is just so sparse right now, but being on the whim of extinction, on especially in the advent of seismic and oil and gas exploration.

So, not so much for himself and those of us, like myself when our elders are grandpas, grandmas, aunts and great aunts, desire for their dietary and nutritional supplements for burbit, grayling, white fish or small white fish or what have you from these lakes and rivers, we -- we do go harvest these through the ice, through under ice fishing or any way we can, including hunting of caribou.

And as you know, the more encroachment there is on these areas and known areas that it is no secret that when you place equipment on a piece of property where a caribou is eating his lichen and you get to that same spot, the caribou is going to have to move. And this causes the habitat area to be removed or relocated or migrate someplace else. That's an example.

And for those like himself and those of the community need to also voice more concerns to protect our renewable

resources, even in lakes where there are no drainages, because

these lakes with no drainages have over wintering fishes, habitat  
fish habitat, that they -- in these deep lakes.  
A concern besides that is of the early warming weather,  
the thawing of permafrost can cause some lakes and have early  
drainages and may cause some lakes to drain even with fish in it,  
and that that needs to -- those needs are very sensitive,  
especially lakes that are near ravines or rivers that should not  
be encroached upon. And that needs to have a more sensitive  
protection.

We, the Inupiat people in Atqasuk and the Arctic Slope  
and Barrow that have survived and rely on subsistence resources  
to sustain our livelihood. Even today these include the  
residents of Wainwright because they are heavy users on the  
renewable resources from Ikpikpuk to Wainwright to Colville  
River. And we need to maintain these protective setbacks for  
stipulations on our renewable resources on which we have survived  
and maintained our subsistence livelihood, and support those  
persons that are in need of subsistence who are trying to draft  
these stipulations and protect our renewable resources in the  
advent of oil and gas exploration in NPR-A.

Thank you, Thomas.

CHAIR BROWER: It is 8:25. It is my duty as the  
hearing officer to officially close the public comment period  
here in Atqasuk. And as I stated earlier, that your written  
comments will be -- you can still submit your written comments to  
Susan Childs, Bob Schneider or to me, to the Mayor's office at

which I can relay and send your letters or comments to Susan and

Bob's office.

Again, I did indicate that there's a CD in the community that will also be provided at the Barrow meeting for those of your that are listening and want to attend the public hearing in Barrow, then you can have your comments if you want to write them or if you want to get a disk, you can get it in Barrow at the Inupiat Heritage Center in a couple of days.

The Atqasuk Public Hearing on NPR-A Amendments is officially closed, and if you have any questions, Susan Childs and the staff of BLM, Bob, will be available to talk to you, answer any questions relating to how and when, and any other concerns you may have relative to the amendments and comments already submitted by Conoco-Phillips or other persons that spoke. I see -- on behalf of the North Slope Borough Mayor's office, BLM, I thank you for your time and I want to express our thanks and appreciation to the KBRW staff that are here to make this as wide of a public comment period. (Speaking in Inupiaq)

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Thank you.

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END OF PROCEEDINGS \* \* \*

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